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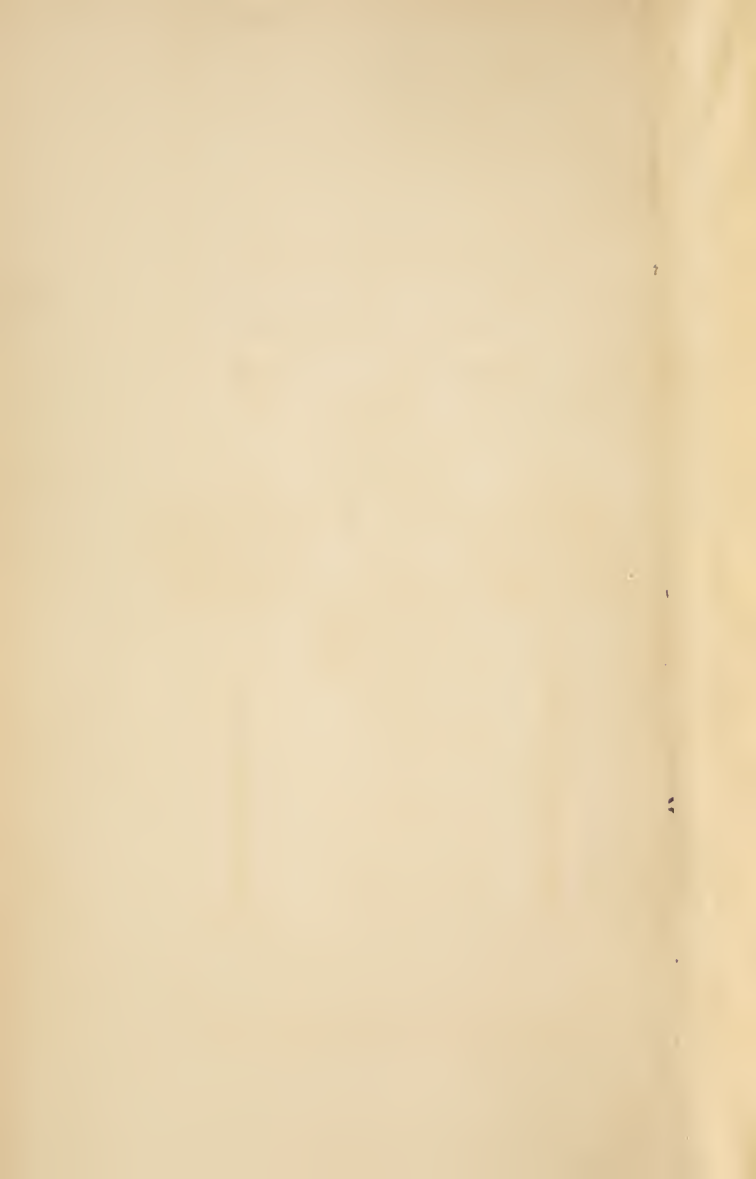


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POETRY FOR
CHILDREN

BY
Charles and
Mary Lamb



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WINIFRED GREEN

With a prefatory note by
ISRAEL GOLLANCZ

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To the

Gentle Reader

AS often as I pass a little Blue-coat boy I gaze upon him lovingly: I reverence the quaint vision of a bygone age called up by the long blue gaberdine, the red leathern belt, the yellow stockings—a quaint monkish figure still to be seen in crowded London streets, still adding to their picturesqueness and ever-varying charm.

You, too, dear Reader, have yourself probably asked the meaning of the strange sight, as you have passed one of these English lads so strangely attired. Perhaps you have been shown the famous old school, in the midst of the bustle of London, surrounded by ugly warehouses, offices, and shops; and you have seen the effigy of the Founder, "that godly and royal child, King Edward the Sixth, the flower of the Tudor name—the young flower that was untimely cropped as it began to fill our land with its

early odours—the boy-patron of boys—the serious and holy child who walked with Cranmer and Ridley.”

Alas, London is no longer to be the home of these boys, and the cloisters of the Old Grey Friars will soon moulder away, when the merry noise of sports and revels cease to awaken them to life.

As I looked through the bars the other day watching the boys at their games, a strange fancy came to me. I thought I saw a pale and studious “Grecian” (as they call the head boys of the school), and walking at his side, with glittering eyes full of wonderment, was a younger lad—a boy with crisply curling black hair, and with ruddy brown complexion, and in his look so much loveliness and trustfulness, that I felt myself envying the elder lad, whose hand rested so affectionately on the shoulder of his friend. I drew near to listen to their talk. The thoughtful Grecian was discoursing learnedly yet so sweetly about some deep matter of philosophy: it seemed somewhat beyond the younger boy, but he listened quietly, rapt in admiration. Suddenly the school-bell sounded. “Hurry on, Charles!” “Mid deepest meditation sounds the knell.” Tha

how your good old Elizabethans would put it We'll have another talk after supper." "I—I've n—not h—h—had o—one t—t—talk y—yet, S... T... C," stammered the other in reply: a painful contrast to the sublime eloquence that flowed from his companion.

The noise of the bell and scampering of the boys soon made me realise that Fancy had led me back a hundred years and more, and had given me a glimpse of the boyhood of two famous Englishmen, who have added glory to their ancient school—Samuel Taylor Coleridge, poet and philosopher, and Charles Lamb, essayist and critic, the best beloved of all the good and great men whose writings are dear to us.

Some day you will read the story of the lives of these two men, and you will love their books, —the weird and fairy poetry of Coleridge, recalling a dreamy youth reared amid the woodlands of Devon—the genial and sweet essays of Lamb, so full of gentle humour, and kindness, and humanity, so rich in tender thoughts concerning all his fellow-creatures in the great city where he was born and bred, which he loved passionately. To London he had given "his

heart and his love in childhood and in boyhood," and throughout his life his heart was filled with "fulness of joy at the multitudinous scenes of life in the crowded streets of ever dear London."

Charles Lamb's Essays are among the greatest of our treasures, but even more beautiful than his writings is the record of his noble life—a life of saintly self-sacrifice, cheerfully devoted to the guardianship of a lonely sister, whose girlhood would have been spent in loveless solitude but for her brother's love. Mary Lamb's tragic story (too sad to be told here) was illumined by the light of this brotherly love which shone forth when the world was very dark and gloomy.

Mary Lamb had something of her brother's gift of writing; it was she indeed to whom you owe many of the Tales of Shakespeare you are so fond of. They loved children, and they loved Shakespeare, and their stories from Shakespeare have been and are still read by boys and girls all the world over. They wrote, too, a whole collection of Poetry for Children, and here also Mary's share was much greater than her brother's. "Mine," wrote Charles, "are but one-third in quantity of the whole." . . . "Perhaps

you will admire the number of subjects, all of children, picked out by an old bachelor and an old maid. Many parents would not have found so many." This collection of "Poetry for Children," in two small volumes, was so much liked by the children that all the copies were soon bought up, and Charles Lamb himself could not get a copy, when later in life he sought one far and wide. So rare is the book now that only one or two copies are known to exist, and even the British Museum does not possess these precious little volumes. A small selection of the poems are now once again offered to boys and girls: if this prove welcome, more will follow. They are simple little poems such as children should care for, and even grown-up people, for whom they were never intended, cherish every word written by Mary and Charles Lamb, because they know how much goodness and humility dwelt in their souls. If there were any wish to be learned and to explain how they came to write these verses, one would have to tell you something about other writers who were then living and writing, more especially about Lamb's friend "S. T. C.,"

who, together with an even greater poet, William Wordsworth, had published ten years before, in 1798, a small volume of simple English poems, which was destined to have the greatest influence on English poetry for long years to come. In that volume Wordsworth first printed the sweet little poem I am sure you know, called We Are Seven, and Coleridge, "the inspired charity boy," as Charles Lamb called him, gave the world the magical ballad of The Ancient Mariner. One verse from this ballad ought to be printed on the title-page of this little book of poems by Mary and Charles Lamb:—

*"He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things both great and small;
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all."*

I. G.



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THE
FIRST TOOTH

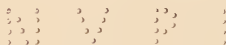
I

SISTER

THROUGH the house what busy joy
Just because the infant boy
Has a tiny tooth to show!
I have got a double row,
All as white and all as small;
Yet no one cares for mine at all.
He can say but half a word,
Yet that single sound's preferr'd
To all the words that I can say
In the longest summer day.
He cannot walk; yet if he put
With mimic motion out his foot,
As if he thought he were advancing,
It's prized more than my best dancing.

BROTHER

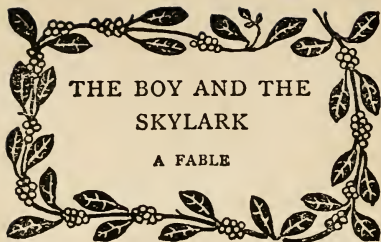
Sister, I know you jesting are,
Yet O! of jealousy beware.





If the smallest seed should be
In your mind, of jealousy,
It will spring and it will shoot
Till it bear the baneful fruit.
I remember you, my dear,
Young as is this infant here.
There was not a tooth of those
Your pretty even ivory rows,
But as anxiously was watch'd
Till it burst its shell new-hatch'd
As if it a phœnix were,
Or some other wonder rare.
So when you began to walk—
So when you began to talk—
As now, the same encomiums pass'd
'Tis not fitting this should last
Longer than our infant days;
A child is fed with milk and praise.





THE BOY AND THE
SKYLARK

A FABLE

II

“ A WICKED action fear to do,
When you are by yourself; for though
 You think you can conceal it,
A little bird that's in the air
The hidden trespass shall declare
 And openly reveal it.”

Richard this saying oft had heard,
Until the sight of any bird
 Would set his heart a-quaking;
He saw a host of winged spies
For ever o'er him in the skies,
 Note of his actions taking.

This pious precept, while it stood
In his remembrance, kept him good
 When nobody was by him;
For though no human eye was near,
Yet Richard still did wisely fear
 The little bird should spy him.



But best resolves will sometimes sleep ;
Poor frailty will not always keep
 From that which is forbidden ;
And Richard one day, left alone,
Laid hands on something not his own,
 And hoped the theft was hidden.

His conscience slept a day or two,
As it is very apt to do,
 When we with pain suppress it ;
And though at times a slight remorse
Would raise a pang, it had not force
 To make him yet confess it.

When on a day, as he abroad
Walk'd by his mother, in their road
 He heard a skylark singing ;
Smit with the sound, a flood of tears
Proclaim'd the superstitious fears
 His inmost bosom wringing.

His mother, wondering, saw him cry,
And fondly ask'd the reason why ?
 Then Richard made confession,
And said, he fear'd the little bird
He singing in the air had heard
 Was telling his transgression.

The words which Richard spoke below,
As sounds by nature upwards go,
 Were to the skylark carried :
The airy traveller with surprise,
To hear his sayings, in the skies
 On his mid-journey tarried.

His anger then the bird express'd :
"Sure, since the day I left the nest,
 I ne'er heard folly utter'd
So fit to move a skylark's mirth,
As what this little son of earth
 Hath in his grossness mutter'd.

"Dull fool! to think we sons of air
On man's low actions waste a care,
 His virtues or his vices ;
Or soaring on the summer gales
That we should stoop to carry tales
 Of him or his devices !

"Mistaken fool! man needs not us
His secret merits to discuss,
 Or spy out his transgression ;
When once he feels his conscience stirr'd,
That voice within him is the *bird*
 That moves him to confession."



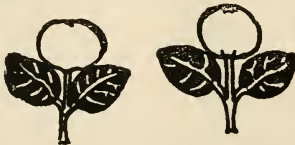
THE RAINBOW

III

AFTER the tempest in the sky,
How sweet yon rainbow to the eye !
Come, my Matilda, now while some
Few drops of rain are yet to come,
In this honeysuckle bower
Safely shelter'd from the shower,
We may count the colours o'er.
Seven there are, there are no more ;
Each in each so finely blended,
Where they begin, or where are ended,
The finest eye can scarcely see.
A fixed thing it seems to be ;
But, while we speak, see how it glides
Away, and now observe it hides
Half of its perfect arch ; now we
Scarce any part of it can see.
What is colour ? If I were
A natural philosopher,
I would tell you what does make
This meteor every colour take ;



But an unlearned eye may view
Nature's rare sights, and love them too.
Whenever I a rainbow see,
Each precious tint is dear to me ;
For every colour find I there
Which flowers, which fields, which ladies wear ;
My favourite green, the grass's hue,
And the fine deep violet-blue,
And the pretty pale blue-bell,
And the rose I love so well ;
All the wondrous variations
Of the tulip, pinks, carnations ;
This woodbine here, both flower and leaf ;
'Tis a truth that's past belief,
That every flower and every tree
And every living thing we see,
Every face which we espy,
Every cheek and every eye,
In all their tints, in every shade,
Are from the rainbow's colours made.





QUEEN ORIANA'S
DREAM

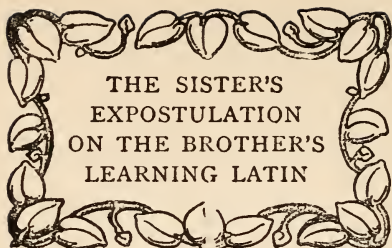
IV

ON a bank with roses shaded,
Whose sweet scent the violets aided.
Violets whose breath alone
Yields but feeble smell or none,
(Sweeter bed Jove ne'er reposed on
When his eyes Olympus closed on,)
While o'erhead six slaves did hold
Canopy of cloth o' gold,
And two more did music keep
Which might Juno lull to sleep,
Oriana who was queen
To the mighty Tamerlane,
That was lord of all the land
Between Thrace and Samarcand,
While the noon-tide fervour beam'd,
Mus'd herself to sleep, and *dream'd*.

Thus far, in magnificent strain,
A young poet soothed his vein,

But he had nor prose nor numbers
To express a princess' slumbers.—
Youthful Richard had strange fancies,
Was deep versed in old romances,
And could talk whole hours upon
The great Cham and Prester John,—
Tell the field in which the Sophi
From the Tartar won a trophy—
What he read with such delight of
Thought he could as easily write of ;
But his over-young invention
Kept not pace with brave intention.
Twenty suns did rise and set,
And he could no further get ;
But, unable to proceed,
Made a virtue out of need ;
And his labours wiselier deem'd of,
Did omit *what the queen dream'd of.*





THE SISTER'S
EXPOSTULATION
ON THE BROTHER'S
LEARNING LATIN

V

SHUT these odious books up, brother ;
They have made you quite another
Thing from what you used to be :
Once you liked to play with me,
Now you leave me all alone,
And are so conceited grown
With your Latin, you'll scarce look
Upon any English book.
We had used on winter eves
To con over Shakespeare's leaves,
Or on Milton's harder sense
Exercise our diligence,
And you would explain with ease
The obscurer passages ;
Find me out the prettiest places,
The poetic turns and graces,
Which, alas ! now you are gone,
I must puzzle out alone ;



And oft miss the meaning quite,
Wanting you to set me right.
All this comes since you've been under
Your new master. I much wonder
What great charm it is you see
In those words, *musa*, *musæ* ;
Or in what do they excel
Our word *song*. It sounds as well
To my fancy as the other.
Now believe me, dearest brother,
I would give my finest frock
And my cabinet and stock
Of new playthings, every toy,
I would give them all with joy,
Could I you returning see
Back to English and to me.





THE BROTHER'S
REPLY

VI

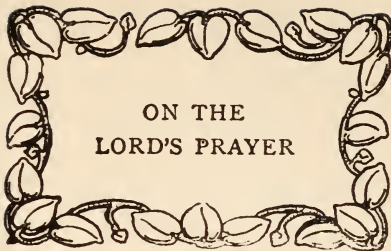
SISTER, fie for shame, no more !
Give this ignorant babble o'er,
Nor, with little female pride,
Things above your sense deride.
Why this foolish underrating
Of my first attempts at Latin ?
Know you not each thing we prize
Does from small beginnings rise ?
'Twas the same thing with your writing
Which you now take such delight in.
First you learnt the down-stroke line,
Then the hairstroke thin and fine,
Then a curve and then a better,
Till you came to form a letter ;
Then a new task was begun,
How to join them two in one ;
Till you got (these first steps pass'd)
To your fine text-hand at last.
So, though I at first commence
With the humble accidence,

And my study's course affords
Little else as yet but words,
I shall venture in a while
At construction, grammar, style,
Learn my syntax, and proceed
Classic authors next to read,
Such as wiser, better, make us,
Sallust, Phædrus, Ovid, Flaccus :
All the poets with their wit,
All the grave historians writ,
Who the lives and actions show
Of men famous long ago ;
Even their very sayings giving
In the tongue they used when living.

Think not I shall do that wrong
Either to my native tongue,
English authors to despise,
Or those books which you so prize ;
Though from them awhile I stray,
By new studies call'd away,
Them when next I take in hand,
I shall better understand ;
For I've heard wise men declare
Many words in English are
From the Latin tongue derived,
Of whose sense girls are deprived

'Cause they do not Latin know.
But if all your anger grow
From this cause, that you suspect,
By proceedings indirect,
I would keep (as miser's pelf)
All this learning to myself;
Sister, to remove this doubt,
Rather than we will fall out,
(If our parents will agree)
You shall Latin learn with me.





ON THE
LORD'S PRAYER

VII

I HAVE taught your young lips the good words to
say over,
Which form the petition we call The Lord's
Prayer,
And now let me help my dear child to discover
The meaning of all the good words that are there.

"Our Father," the same appellation is given
To a parent on earth, and a Parent of all,
O gracious permission! the God that's in heaven
Allows His poor creatures Him Father to call.

To "hallow His name" is to think with devotion
Of it, and with reverence mention the same;
Though you are so young, you should strive for
some notion
Of the awe we should feel at the Holy One's
name.

His "will done on earth, as it is done in heaven,"
Is a wish and a hope we are suffer'd to
breathe,
That such grace and favour to us may be given,
Like good angels on high we may live here be-
neath.

"Our daily bread give us," your young apprehen-
sion
May well understand, is to pray for our food ;
Although we ask bread, and no other thing
mention,
God's bounty gives all things sufficient and
good.

You pray that your "trespasses may be forgiven,
As you forgive those that are done unto
you."
Before this you say to the God that's in heaven,
Consider the words which you speak—are they
true ?

If any one has in the past time offended
Us angry creatures, who soon take offence,
These words in the prayer are surely intended
To soften our minds, and expel wrath from
thence.



WG

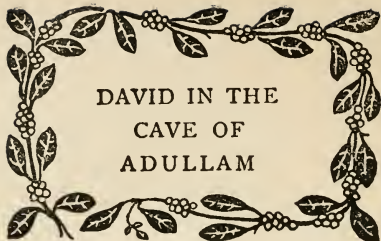
We pray that "temptations may never assail us,"
And "deliverance beg from all evil," we find:
But we never can hope that our prayer will avail us,
If we strive not to banish ill thoughts from our
mind.

"For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory,
For ever and ever," these titles are meant
To express God's dominion and majesty o'er ye;
And "Amen" to the sense of the whole gives
assent.





WG



DAVID IN THE
CAVE OF
ADULLAM

VIII

DAVID and his three captains bold
Kept ambush once within a hold.
It was in Adullam's cave
Nigh which no water they could have.
Nor spring, nor running brook, was near
To quench the thirst that parch'd them there.
Then David, King of Israel,
Straight bethought him of a well
Which stood beside the city gate
At Bethlem; where, before his state
Of kingly dignity, he had
Oft drunk his fill, a shepherd lad;
But now his fierce Philistine foe
Encamp'd before it he does know.
Yet ne'ertheless, with heat oppress'd,
Those three bold captains he address'd,
And wish'd that one to him would bring
Some water from his native spring.
His valiant captains instantly
To execute his will did fly.

Those three brave men the ranks broke through
Of armed foes, and water drew
For David, their beloved king,
At his own sweet native spring.
Back through their enemies they haste,
With the hard-earn'd treasure graced.
What with such danger they had sought
With joy unto their king they brought.
But when the good king David found
What they had done, he on the ground
The water pour'd, "Because," said he,
"That it was at the jeopardy
Of your three lives this thing ye did,
That I should drink it God forbid!"





CLEANLINESS

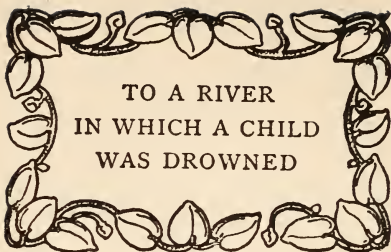
IX

COME, my little Robert, near—
Fie! what filthy hands are here!
Who, that e'er could understand
The rare structure of a hand,
With its branching fingers fine,
Work itself of hands divine,
Strong, yet delicately knit,
For ten thousand uses fit,
Overlaid with so clear skin
You may see the blood within,—
Who this hand would choose to cover
With a crust of dirt all over,
Till it look'd in hue and shape
Like the forefoot of an ape!
Man or boy that works or plays
In the fields or the highways,
May, without offence or hurt,
From the soil contract a dirt
Which the next clear spring or river
Washes out and out for ever—



But to cherish stains impure,
Soil deliberate to endure,
On the skin to fix a stain
Till it works into the grain,
Argues a degenerate mind,
Sordid, slothful, ill-inclined,
Wanting in that self-respect
Which does virtue best protect.
All-endearing cleanliness,
Virtue next to godliness,
Easiest, cheapest, needfull'st duty,
To the body health and beauty;
Who that's human would refuse it,
When a little water does it ?





TO A RIVER
IN WHICH A CHILD
WAS DROWNED

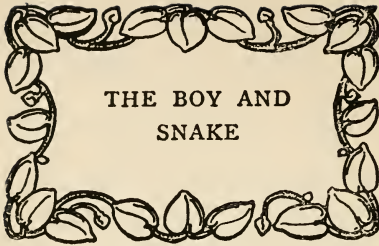
X

SMILING river, smiling river,
On thy bosom sunbeams play ;
Though they're fleeting, and retreating,
Thou hast more deceit than they.

In thy channel, in thy channel,
Choked with ooze and gravelly stones,
Deep immersed, and unheard,
Lies young Edward's corse ; his bones

Ever whitening, ever whitening,
As thy waves against them dash ;
What thy torrent, in the current,
Swallow'd, now it helps to wash.

As if senseless, as if senseless
Things had feeling in this case ;
What so blindly and unkindly
It destroy'd, it now does grace.



THE BOY AND
SNAKE

XI

HENRY was every morning fed
With a full mess of milk and bread.
One day the boy his breakfast took,
And ate it by a purling brook.
His mother lets him have his way.
With free leave Henry every day
Thither repairs, until she heard
Him talking of a fine *grey bird*.
This pretty bird, he said, indeed,
Came every day with him to feed ;
And it loved him and loved his milk,
And it was smooth and soft like silk.
On the next morn she follows Harry,
And carefully she sees him carry
Through the long grass his heap'd-up mess.
What was her terror and distress
When she saw the infant take
His bread and milk close to a snake !
Upon the grass he spreads his feast
And sits down by his frightful guest.

Who had waited for the treat ;
And now they both began to eat.
Fond mother ! shriek not, O beware
The least small noise, O have a care—
The least small noise that may be made
The wily snake will be afraid—
If he hear the slightest sound,
He will inflict th' envenom'd wound.
—She speaks not, moves not, scarce does breathe,
As she stands the trees beneath.
No sound she utters ; and she soon
Sees the child lift up his spoon,
And tap the snake upon the head,
Fearless of harm ; and then he said,
As speaking to familiar mate,
“ Keep on your own side, do, Grey Pate ; ”
The snake then to the other side,
As one rebuked, seems to glide ;
And now again advancing nigh,
Again she hears the infant cry,
Tapping the snake, “ Keep further, do ;
Mind, Grey Pate, what I say to you.”
The danger's o'er ! she sees the boy
(O what a change from fear to joy !)
Rise and bid the snake “ good-bye ; ”
Says he, “ Our breakfast's done, and I
Will come again to-morrow day ; ”
Then lightly tripping, ran away.



W.G



THE BEASTS IN
THE TOWER

XII

WITHIN the precincts of this yard,
Each in his narrow confines barr'd,
Dwells every beast that can be found
On Afric or on Indian ground ;
How different was the life they led
In those wild haunts where they were bred,
To this tame servitude and fear,
Enslaved by man, they suffer here !

In that uneasy close recess
Couches a sleeping lioness ;
That next den holds a bear ; the next
A wolf, by hunger ever vext :
There, fiercer from the keeper's lashes,
His teeth the fell hyena gnashes ;
That creature on whose back abound
Black spots upon a yellow ground,
A panther is—the fairest beast
That haunteth in the spacious East :

He underneath a fair outside
Does cruelty and treachery hide.
That catlike beast that to and fro
Restless as fire does ever go,
As if his courage did resent
His limbs in such confinement pent,
That should their prey in forest take,
And make the Indian jungles quake,
A tiger is. Observe how sleek
And glossy smooth his coat ; no streak
On satin ever match'd the pride
Of that which marks his furry hide.
How strong his muscles ! he with ease
Upon the tallest man could seize ;
In his large mouth away could bear him,
And into thousand pieces tear him :
Yet cabin'd so securely here,
The smallest infant need not fear.

That lordly creature next to him
A lion is. Survey each limb ;
Observe the texture of his claws,
The massy thickness of those jaws ;
His mane that sweeps the ground in length,
Like Samson's locks, betokening strength.
In force and swiftness he excels
Each beast that in the forest dwells ;

The savage tribes him king confess
Throughout the howling wilderness.
Woe to the hapless neighbourhood
When he is press'd by want of food!
Of man, or child, or bull, or horse
He makes his prey, such is his force.
A waste behind him he creates,
Whole villages depopulates;
Yet here within appointed lines
How small a grate his rage confines!

This place, methinks, resembles well
The world itself in which we dwell.
Perils and snares on every ground
Like these wild beasts beset us round.
But Providence their rage restrains,
Our heavenly Keeper sets them chains;
His goodness saveth every hour
His darlings from the lion's power.







TIME SPENT IN
DRESS

XIII

IN many a lecture, many a book,
You all have heard, you all have read,
That time is precious. Of its use
Much has been written, much been said.

There's not a more productive source
Of waste of time to the young mind
Than dress; as it regards our hours,
My view of it is now confined.

Without some calculation, youth
May live to age, and never guess
That no one study they pursue
Takes half the time they give to dress.

Write in your memorandum book
The time you at your toilette spend;
Then, every moment which you pass
Talking of dress with a young friend;

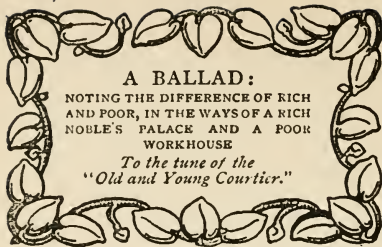
And ever when your silent thoughts
Have on this subject been intent,
Set down as nearly as you can,
How long on dress your thoughts were bent.



WG

If faithfully you should perform
This task, 'twould teach you to repair
Lost hours, by giving unto dress
Not more of time than its due share.





A BALLAD:

NOTING THE DIFFERENCE OF RICH
AND POOR, IN THE WAYS OF A RICH
NOBLE'S PALACE AND A POOR
WORKHOUSE

*To the tune of the
"Old and Young Courtier."*

XIV

In a costly palace Youth goes clad in gold ;
In a wretched workhouse Age's limbs are cold :
There they sit, the old men by a shivering fire,
Still close and closer cowering, warmth is their
desire.

In a costly palace, when the brave gallants dine,
They have store of good venison, with old canary
wine,
With singing and music to heighten the cheer ;
Coarse bits, with grudging, are the pauper's best
fare.

In a costly palace Youth is still caress'd
By a train of attendants which laugh at my young
 Lord's jest ;
In a wretched workhouse the contrary prevails,
Does age begin to prattle?—no man hearkeneth to
 his tales.

In a costly palace if the child with a pin
Do but chance to prick a finger, straight the doctor
 is call'd in ;
In a wretched workhouse men are left to perish,
For want of proper cordials, which their old age
 might cherish.

In a costly palace Youth enjoys his lust ;
In a wretched workhouse Age, in corners thrust,
Thinks upon the former days, when he was well
 to do,
Had children to stand by him, both friends and
 kinsmen too.

In a costly palace Youth his temples hides
With a new devised peruke that reaches to his
 sides ;
In a wretched workhouse Age's crown is bare,
With a few thin locks just to fence out the cold air.



wo

In peace, as in war, 'tis our young gallants' pride
To walk, each one i' the streets, with a rapier by
his side,
That none to do them injury may have pretence;
Wretched Age, in poverty, must brook offence.







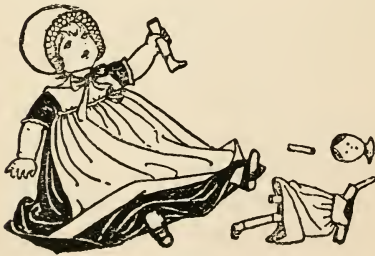
THE
BROKEN DOLL

XV

AN infant is a selfish sprite :
But what of that? the sweet delight
Which from participation springs,
Is quite unknown to these young things.
We elder children then will smile
At our dear little John awhile,
And bear with him, until he see
There is a sweet felicity
In pleasing more than only one,
Dear little, craving, selfish John.

He laughs, and thinks it a fine joke
That he our new wax doll has broke.
Anger will never teach him better :
We will the spirit and the letter
Of courtesy to him display
By taking in a friendly way
These baby frolics ; till he learn
True sport from mischief to discern.

Reproof a parent's province is ;
A sister's discipline is this ;
By studied kindness to effect
A little brother's young respect.
What is a doll ? a fragile toy.
What is its loss ? If the dear boy,
Who half perceives he's done amiss,
Retain impression of the kiss
That follow'd instant on his cheek ;
If the kind loving words we speak
Of " Never mind it : " " We forgive ; "
If these in his short memory live
Only perchance for half-a-day—
Who minds a doll—if that should lay
The first impression in his mind
That sisters are to brothers kind ?
For thus the broken doll may prove
Foundation to fraternal love.





GOING INTO
BREECHES

XVI

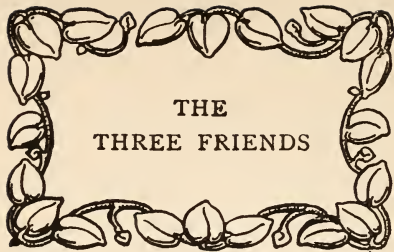
Joy to Philip! he this day
Has his long coats cast away,
And (the childish season gone)
Put the manly breeches on.
Officer on gay parade,
Red-coat in his first cockade,
Bridegroom in his wedding trim,
Birthday beau surpassing him,
Never did with conscious gait
Strut about in half the state
Or the pride (yet free from sin)
Of my little MANIKIN:
Never was there pride or bliss
Half so rational as his.
Sashes, frocks, to those that need 'em,
Philip's limbs have got their freedom—
He can run, or he can ride,
And do twenty things beside,



Which his petticoats forbad ;
Is he not a happy lad ?
Now he's under other banners
He must leave his former manners ;
Bid adieu to female games
And forget their very names ;
Puss-in-corners, hide-and-seek,
Sports for girls and punies weak !
Baste-the-bear he now may play at,
Leap-frog, football sport away at ;
Show his skill and strength at cricket,
Mark his distance, pitch his wicket ;
Run about in winter's snow
Till his cheeks and fingers glow ;
Climb a tree or scale a wall
Without any fear to fall.
If he get a hurt or bruise,
To complain he must refuse,
Though the anguish and the smart
Go unto his little heart ;
He must have his courage ready,
Keep his voice and visage steady ;
Brace his eyeballs stiff as drum,
That a tear may never come ;
And his grief must only speak
From the colour in his cheek.

This and more he must endure,
Hero he in miniature.
This and more must now be done,
Now the breeches are put on.





THE
THREE FRIENDS

XVII

THREE young maids in friendship met,
Mary, Martha, Margaret.
Margaret was tall and fair,
Martha shorter by a hair ;
If the first excell'd in feature,
The other's grace and ease were greater ;
Mary, though to rival loth,
In their best gifts equal'd both.
They a due proportion kept ;
Martha mourn'd if Margaret wept ;
Margaret joy'd when any good
She of Martha understood ;
And in sympathy for either
Mary was outdone by neither.
Thus far, for a happy space,
All three ran an even race,
A most constant friendship proving,
Equally beloved and loving ;
All their wishes, joys, the same,
Sisters only not in name.

Fortune upon each one smiled
As upon a favourite child ;
Well to do and well to see
Were the parents of all three ;
Till on Martha's father crosses
Brought a flood of worldly losses,
And his fortunes rich and great
Changed at once to low estate ;
Under which o'erwhelming blow
Martha's mother was laid low ;
She a hapless orphan left,
Of maternal care bereft,
Trouble following trouble fast,
Lay in a sick bed at last.

In the depth of her affliction
Martha now received conviction
That a true and faithful friend
Can the surest comfort lend.
Night and day, with friendship tried,
Ever constant by her side
Was her gentle Mary found,
With a love that knew no bound ;
And the solace she imparted
Saved her dying broken-hearted.

In this scene of earthly things
Not one good unmixed springs.
That which had to Martha proved
A sweet consolation, moved
Different feelings of regret
In the mind of Margaret.
She, whose love was not less dear,
Nor affection less sincere,
To her friend, was by occasion
Of more distant habitation
Fewer visits forced to pay her,
When no other cause did stay her ;
And her Mary living nearer,
Margaret began to fear her
Lest her visits day by day
Martha's heart should steal away.
That whole heart she ill could spare her
Where till now she'd been a sharer.
From this cause with grief she pined,
Till at length her health declined.
All her cheerful spirits flew,
Fast as Martha gather'd new ;
And her sickness waxed sore,
Just when Martha felt no more.



Mary, who had quick suspicion
Of her alter'd friend's condition,
Seeing Martha's convalescence
Less demanded now her presence,
With a goodness built on reason,
Changed her measures with the season,
Turn'd her steps from Martha's door,
Went where she was wanted more ;
All her care and thoughts were set
Now to tend on Margaret.
Mary living 'twixt the two,
From her home could oftener go
Either of her friends to see
Than they could together be.

Truth explain'd is to suspicion
Evermore the best physician.
Soon her visits had the effect ;
All that Margaret did suspect
From her fancy vanish'd clean ;
She was soon what she had been,
And the colour she did lack
To her faded cheek came back,
Wounds which love had made her feel,
Love alone had power to heal.

Martha, who the frequent visit
Now had lost, and sore did miss it,
With impatience waxed cross,
Counted Margaret's gain her loss :
All that Mary did confer
On her friend, thought due to her.
In her girlish bosom rise
Little foolish jealousies,
Which into such rancour wrought,
She one day for Margaret sought ;
Finding her by chance alone,
She began, with reasons shown,
To insinuate a fear
Whether Mary was sincere ;
Wish'd that Margaret would take heed
Whence her actions did proceed.
For herself, she'd long been minded
Not with outsides to be blinded ;
All that pity and compassion,
She believed was affectation ;
In her heart she doubted whether
Mary cared a pin for either.
She could keep whole weeks at distance
And not know of their existence,
While all things remain'd the same ;
But when some misfortune came,
Then she made a great parade



WG

Of her sympathy and aid,—
Not that she did really grieve,
It was only *make-believe*,
And she cared for nothing, so
She might her fine feelings show,
And get credit on her part
For a soft and tender heart.

With such speeches, smoothly made,
She found methods to persuade
Margaret (who, being sore
From the doubts she'd felt before,
Was prepared for mistrust)
To believe her reasons just ;
Quite destroy'd that comfort glad
Which in Mary late she had ;
Made her, in experience' spite,
Think her friend a hypocrite,
And resolve, with cruel scoff,
To renounce and cast her off.

See how good turns are rewarded !
She of both is now discarded,
Who to both had been so late
Their support in low estate,
All their comfort, and their stay—

Now of both is cast away.
But the league her presence cherish'd,
Losing its best prop, soon perish'd ;
She, that was a link to either,
To keep them and it together,
Being gone, the two (no wonder)
That were left soon fell asunder ;—
Some civilities were kept,
But the heart of friendship slept ;
Love with hollow forms was fed,
But the life of love lay dead :—
A cold intercourse they held
After Mary was expell'd.

Two long years did intervene
Since they'd either of them seen,
Or by letter, any word
Of their old companion heard,—
When, upon a day once walking,
Of indifferent matters talking,
They a female figure met ;—
Martha said to Margaret,
“ That young maid in face does carry
A resemblance strong of Mary,”
Margaret, at nearer sight,
Own'd her observation right ;

But they did not far proceed
Ere they found 'twas she indeed.
She—but, ah! how changed they view her
From that person which they knew her!
Her fine face disease had scarr'd,
And its matchless beauty marr'd:—
But enough was left to trace
Mary's sweetness—Mary's grace.
When her eye did first behold them,
How they blush'd! but when she told them
How on a sick bed she lay
Months, while they had kept away
And had no inquiries made
If she were alive or dead;—
How, for want of a true friend,
She was brought near to her end,
And was like so to have died
With no friend at her bedside;—
How the constant irritation
Caused by fruitless expectation
Of their coming, had extended
The illness, when she might have mended,—
Then, O then, how did reflection
Come on them with recollection!
All that she had done for them,
How it did their fault condemn!

But sweet Mary, still the same,
Kindly eased them of their shame ;
Spoke to them with accents bland,
Took them friendly by the hand ;
Bound them both with promise fast
Not to speak of troubles past ;
Made them on the spot declare
A new league of friendship there ;
Which, without a word of strife,
Lasted thenceforth long as life.
Martha now and Margaret
Strove who most should pay the debt
Which they owed her, nor did vary
Ever after from their Mary.





MEMORY

XVIII

“ FOR gold could Memory be bought,
What treasures would she not be worth !
If from afar she could be brought,
I’d travel for her through the earth.”

This exclamation once was made
By one who had obtain’d the name
Of young forgetful Adelaide ;
And while she spoke, lo ! Memory came—

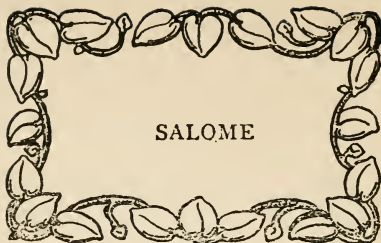
If Memory indeed it were,
Or such it only feign’d to be :
A female figure came to her
Who said, “ My name is Memory !

“ Gold purchases in me no share,
Nor do I dwell in distant land ;
Study, and thought, and watchful care
In every place may me command.

“ I am not lightly to be won ;
A visit only now I make ;
And much must by yourself be done
Ere me you for an inmate take.

“The only substitute for me
Was ever found, is call'd a pen ;
The frequent use of that will be
The way to make me come again.”





SALOME

XIX

ONCE on a charger there was laid
And brought before a royal maid,
As price of attitude and grace,
A guiltless head, a holy face.

It was on Herod's natal day,
Who o'er Judæa's land held sway.
He married his own brother's wife,
Wicked Herodias. She the life
Of John the Baptist long had sought
Because he openly had taught
That she a life unlawful led
Having her husband's brother wed.

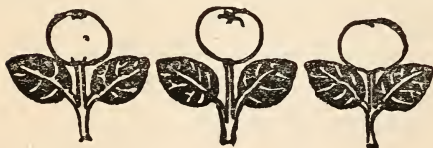
This was he, that saintly John,
Who in the wilderness alone
Abiding, did for clothing wear
A garment made of camel's hair ;
Honey and locusts were his food
And he was most severely good.

He preached penitence and tears
And waking first the sinner's fears,
Prepared a path, made smooth a way
For his diviner Master's day.

Herod kept in princely state
His birthday. On his throne he sate,
After the feast, beholding her
Who danced with grace peculiar ;
Fair Salome, who did excel
All in that land for dancing well.
The feastful monarch's heart was fired,
And whatsoe'er thing she desired,
Though half his kingdom it should be,
He in his pleasure swore that he
Would give the graceful Salome.
The damsel was Herodias' daughter :
She to the queen hastes, and besought her
To teach her what great gift to name.
Instructed by Herodias, came
The damsel back ; to Herod said,
" Give me John the Baptist's head ;
And in a charger let it be
Hither straightway brought to me."
Herod her suit would fain deny,
But for his oath's sake must comply.



When painters would by art express
Beauty in unloveliness,
Thee, Herodias' daughter, thee,
They fittest subject take to be.
They give thy form and features grace;
But ever in thy beauteous face
They show a steadfast cruel gaze,
An eye unpitying; and amaze
In all beholders deep they mark,
That thou betrayest not one spark
Of feeling for the ruthless deed,
That did thy praiseful dance succeed.
For on the head they make you look
As if a sullen joy you took,
A cruel triumph, wicked pride,
That for your sport a saint had died.





THE PEACH

XX

MAMMA gave us a single peach,
She shared it among seven ;
Now you may think that unto each
But a small piece was given.

Yet though each share was very small,
We own'd, when it was eaten,
Being so little for us all
Did its fine flavour heighten.

The tear was in our parent's eye,
It seem'd quite out of season ;
When we ask'd wherefore she did cry,
She thus explain'd the reason :—

“ The cause, my children, I may say,
Was joy, and not dejection ;
The peach, which made you all so gay,
Gave rise to this reflection :



“ It's many a mother's lot to share,
Seven hungry children viewing,
A morsel of the coarsest fare,
As I this peach was doing.”





THE
MAGPIE'S NEST
A FABLE

XXI

WHEN the Arts in their infancy were,
In a fable of old 'tis express'd
A wise magpie constructed that rare
Little house for young birds, call'd a nest.

This was talk'd of the whole country round ;
You might hear it on every bough sung,
“ Now no longer upon the rough ground
Will fond mothers brood over their young :

“ For the magpie with exquisite skill
Has invented a moss-cover'd cell
Within which a whole family will
In the utmost security dwell.”



To her mate did each female bird say,
 "Let us fly to the magpie, my dear ;
If she will but teach us the way,
 A nest we will build us up here.

"It's a thing that's close arch'd overhead,
 With a hole made to creep out and in ;
We, my bird, might make just a bed
 If we only knew how to begin."



To the magpie soon every bird went
 And in modest terms made their request,
That she would be pleased to consent
 To teach them to build up a nest.

She replied, "I will show you the way,
 So observe everything that I do:
First two sticks 'cross each other I lay—"
 "To be sure," said the crow, "why I knew

"It must be begun with two sticks,
 And I thought that they crossed should be."
Said the pie, "Then some straw and moss mix
 In the way you now see done by me."

“O yes, certainly,” said the jackdaw,
“That must follow, of course, I have thought;
Though I never before building saw,
I guess’d that, without being taught.”

“More moss, more straw, and feathers, I place
In this manner,” continued the pie.
“Yes, no doubt, madam, that is the case;
Though no builder myself, so thought I.”



Whatever she taught them beside,
In his turn every bird of them said,
Though the nest-making art he ne’er tried
He had just such a thought in his head.

Still the pie went on showing her art,
Till a nest she had built up half-way;
She no more of her skill would impart,
But in her anger went fluttering away.

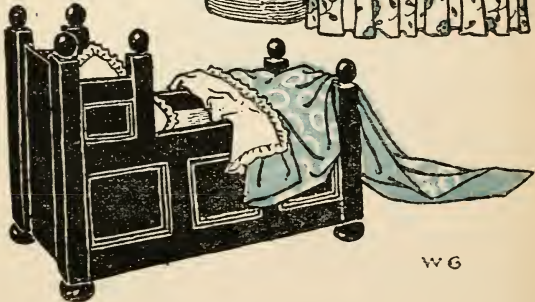
And this speech in their hearing she made,
As she perch’d o’er their heads on a tree:
“If ye all were well skill’d in my trade,
Pray, why came ye to learn it of me?”

When a scholar is willing to learn,
He with silent submission should hear;
Too late they their folly discern,
The effect to this day does appear.

For whenever a pie's nest you see,
Her charming warm canopy view,
All birds' nests but hers seem to be
A magpie's nest just cut in two.*

* I beg to inform my young readers that the magpie is the only bird that builds a top to the nest for her young.







NURSING

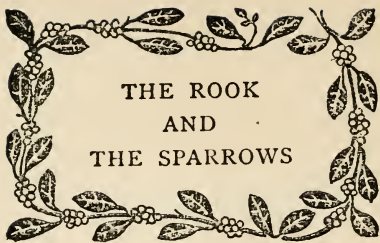
XXII

O HUSH, my little baby brother !
Sleep, my love, upon my knee,
What though, dear child, we've lost our mother ?
That can never trouble thee.

You are but ten weeks old to-morrow ;
What can you know of our loss ?
The house is full enough of sorrow ;
Little baby, don't be cross.

Peace, cry not so, my dearest love !
Hush, my baby bird, lie still,—
He's quiet now, he does not move,
Fast asleep is little Will.

My only solace, only joy,
Since the sad day I lost my mother,
Is nursing her own Willy boy,
My little orphan brother.



XXIII

A LITTLE boy with crumbs of bread
 Many a hungry sparrow fed.
 It was a child of little sense
 Who this kind bounty did dispense ;
 For suddenly 'twas from them torn,
 And all the birds were left forlorn
 In a hard time of frost and snow,
 Not knowing where for food to go.
 He would no longer give them bread,
 Because he had observed, he said,
 A great black bird, a rook by name,
 That sometimes to the window came
 And took away a small bird's share.
 So foolish Henry did not care
 What became of the great rook
 That from the little sparrows took,
 Now and then, as 'twere by stealth,
 A part of their abundant wealth ;



Nor ever more would feed his sparrows.
Thus ignorance a kind heart narrows.
I wish I had been there, I would
Have told the child, rooks live by food
In the same way the sparrows do.
I also would have told him too
Birds act by instinct, and ne'er can
Attain the rectitude of man.
Nay, that even when distress
Does on poor human nature press,
We need not be too strict in seeing
The failings of a fellow-being.





FEIGNED
COURAGE

XXIV

HORATIO, of ideal courage vain,
Was flourishing in air his father's cane,
And, as the fumes of valour swell'd his pate,
Now thought himself *this* hero, and now *that*:
"And now," he cried, "I will Achilles be;
My sword I brandish; see, the Trojans flee!
Now I'll be Hector, when his angry blade
A lane through heaps of slaughter'd Grecians
made!

And now my deeds, still, braver I'll evince,
I am no less than Edward the Black Prince.
Give way, ye coward French!" As thus he
spoke,

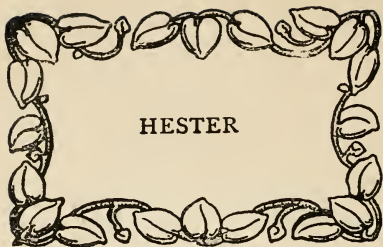
And aim'd in fancy a sufficient stroke
To fix the fate of Crecy or Poitiers
(The Muse relates the Hero's fate with tears),
He struck his milk-white hand against a nail,
Sees his own blood, and feels his courage fail.



WG

Ah! where is now that boasted valour flown,
That in the tented field so late was shown?
Achilles weeps, great Hector hangs his head,
And the Black Prince goes whimpering to bed.





HESTER

XXV

WHEN maidens such as Hester die,
Their place ye may not well supply,
Though ye among a thousand try
 With vain endeavour.
A month or more hath she been dead,
Yet cannot I by force be led
To think upon the wormy bed,
 And her together.

A springy motion in her gait,
A rising step, did indicate
Of pride and joy no common rate,
 That flush'd her spirit.
I know not by what name beside
It may be call'd ; if 'twas not pride,
It was a joy to that allied
 She did inherit.



Her parents held the Quaker rule,
Which doth the human feeling cool,
But she was train'd in Nature's school,
Nature had blest her.

A waking eye, a prying mind,
A heart that stirs is hard to bind,
A hawk's keen sight ye cannot blind,
Ye could not Hester.

My sprightly neighbour, gone before
To that unknown and silent shore,
Shall we not meet, as heretofore,
Some summer morning,
When from thy cheerful eyes a ray
Hath struck a bliss upon the day,
A bliss that would not go away,
A sweet forewarning?





XXVI

HIGH-BORN Helen, round your dwelling
These twenty years I've paced in vain ;
Haughty beauty, thy lover's duty
Hath been to glory in his pain.

High-born Helen, proudly telling
Stories of thy cold disdain ;
I starve, I die, now you comply,
And I no longer can complain.

These twenty years I've lived on tears,
Dwelling for ever on a frown ;
On sighs I've fed, your scorn my bread ;
I perish now you kind are grown.

Can I, who loved my beloved,
But for the scorn "was in her eye,"
Can I be moved for my beloved
When she "returns me sigh for sigh ?"

In stately pride, by my bedside,
High-born Helen's portrait's hung ;
Deaf to my praise, my mournful lays
Are nightly to the portrait sung.



To that I weep, nor ever sleep,
Complaining all night long to her:
Helen, grown old, no longer cold,
Said, "You to all men I prefer."



W G

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XXVII

ABJECT, stooping, old, and wan,
See yon wretched beggar man ;
Once a father's hopeful heir,
Once a mother's tender care.
When too young to understand,
He but scorch'd his little hand
By the candle's flaming light
Attracted, dancing, spiral, bright ;
Clasping fond her darling round,
A thousand kisses heal'd the wound :
Now, abject, stooping, old, and wan,
No mother tends the beggar man.



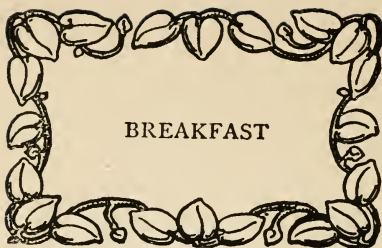
THE BEGGAR MAN



Then nought too good for him to wear,
With cherub face and flaxen hair,
In fancy's choicest gauds array'd,
Cap of lace with rose to aid ;
Milk-white hat and feather blue ;
Shoes of red ; and coral too ;
With silver bells to please his ear,
And charm the frequent ready tear.
Now, abject, stooping, old, and wan,
Neglected is the beggar man.

See the boy advance in age,
And learning spreads her useful page ;
In vain—for giddy pleasure calls,
And shows the marbles, tops, and balls.
What's learning to the charms of play ?
Th' indulgent tutor must give way.
A heedless wilful dunce, and wild,
The parents' fondness spoil'd the child ;
The youth in vagrant courses ran.
Now, abject, stooping, old, and wan,
Their fondling is the beggar man.





BREAKFAST

XXVIII

A DINNER party, coffee, tea,
Sandwich, or supper, all may be
In their way pleasant. But to me
Not one of these deserves the praise
That welcomer of new-born days,
A breakfast, merits; ever giving
Cheerful notice we are living
Another day refresh'd by sleep,
When its festival we keep.
Now, although I would not slight
Those kindly words we use, "Good-night,"
Yet parting words are words of sorrow,
And may not vie with sweet "Good-morrow,"
With which again our friends we greet
When in the breakfast-room we meet,
At the social table round,
Listening to the lively sound
Of those notes which never tire
Of urn or kettle on the fire.



WG

Sleepy Robert never hears
Or urn or kettle ; he appears
When all have finish'd, one by one
Dropping off, and breakfast done.
Yet has he too his own pleasure,
His breakfast hour's his hour of leisure ;
And, left alone, he reads or muses,
Or else in idle mood he uses
To sit and watch the venturous fly,
Where the sugar's piled high,
Clambering o'er the lumps so white,
Rocky cliffs of sweet delight.





THE
COFFEE SLIPS

XXIX

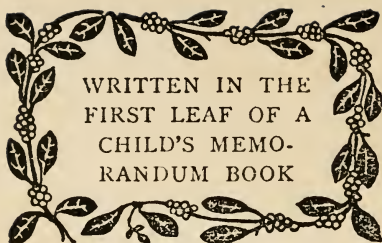
WHENE'ER I fragrant coffee drink
I on the generous Frenchman think,
Whose noble perseverance bore
The tree to Martinico's shore.
While yet her colony was new,
Her island products but a few,
Two shoots from off a coffee-tree
He carried with him o'er the sea.
Each little tender coffee-slip
He waters daily in the ship;
And as he tends his embryo trees
Feels he is raising 'midst the seas
Coffee groves, whose ample shade
Shall screen the dark Creolian maid.
But soon, alas! his darling pleasure
In watching this his precious treasure,



WG

Is like to fade; for water fails
On board the ship in which he sails.
Now all the reservoirs are shut,
The crew on short allowance put;
So small a drop is each man's share
Few leavings you may think there are
To water these poor coffee plants!
But he supplies their gasping wants;
Ev'n from his own dry parched lips
He spares it for his coffee-slips.
Water he gives his nurslings first
Ere he allays his own deep thirst;
Lest if he first the water sip
He bear too far his eager lip.
He sees them droop for want of more;
Yet when they reach the destined shore,
With pride the heroic gardener sees
A living sap still in his trees.
The islanders his praise resound!
Coffee plantations rise around;
And Martinico loads her ships
With produce from those dear-saved slips.*

* The name of this man was Desclieux, and the story is to be found in the Abbé Raynal's History of the Settlements and Trade of the Europeans in the East and West Indies.



WRITTEN IN THE
FIRST LEAF OF A
CHILD'S MEMO-
RANDUM BOOK

XXX

My neat and pretty book, when I thy small lines see,
They seem for any use to be unfit for me:

My writing, all misshaped, uneven as my mind,
Within this narrow space can hardly be confined.
Yet I will strive to make my hand less awkward
look;

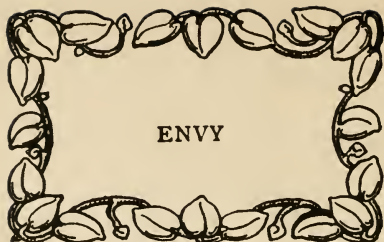
I would not willingly disgrace thee, my neat book!
The finest pens I'll use, and wondrous pains I'll take,
And I these perfect lines my monitors will make.
And every day I will set down in order due
How that day wasted is; and should there be a few
At the year's end that show more goodly to the
sight,

If haply here I find some days not wasted quite,
If a small portion of them I have pass'd aright,
Then shall I think the year not wholly was misspent,
And that my Diary has been by some good angel
sent.



WG





ENVY

XXXI

THIS rose-tree is not made to bear
The violet blue, nor lily fair,
 Nor the sweet mignonette ;
And if this tree were discontent
Or wish'd to change its natural bent,
 It all in vain would fret.

And should it fret, you would suppose
It ne'er had seen its own red rose,
 Nor after gentle shower
Had ever smell'd its rose's scent,
Or it could ne'er be discontent
 With its own pretty flower.

Like such a blind and senseless tree
As I've imagined this to be,
 All envious persons are :
With care and culture all may find
Some pretty flower in their own mind,
 Some talent that is rare.





DIALOGUE
BETWEEN A
MOTHER &
CHILD

XXXII

CHILD.

O LADY, lay your costly robes aside,
No longer may you glory in your pride.

MOTHER.

Wherefore to-day art singing in mine ear
Sad songs, were made so long ago, my dear?
This day I am to be a bride, you know,
Why sing sad songs, were made so long ago?

CHILD.

O Mother, lay your costly robes aside,
For you may never be another's bride.
That line I learn'd not in the old sad song.

MOTHER.

I pray thee, pretty one, now hold thy tongue,
Play with the bride-maids, and be glad, my boy,
For thou shalt be a second father's joy.

CHILD.

One father fondled me upon his knee,
One father is enough, alone, for me.





THE FIRST SIGHT
OF
GREEN FIELDS

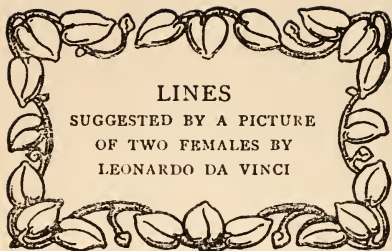
XXXIII

LATELY an equipage I overtook,
And help'd to lift it o'er a narrow brook ;
No horse it had, except one boy, who drew
His sister out in it the fields to view.
O happy town-bred girl, in fine chaise going
For the first time to see the green grass growing !
This was the end and purport of the ride,
I learn'd, as walking slowly by their side
I heard their conversation. Often she—
“ Brother, is this the country that I see ? ”
The bricks were smoking and the ground was broke,
There were no signs of verdure when she spoke.
He, as the well-inform'd delight in chiding
The ignorant, these questions still deriding,
To his good judgment modestly she yields ;
Till, brick-kilns past, they reach'd the open fields.
Then, as with rapturous wonder round she gazes
On the green grass, the buttercups and daisies,—



“This is the country, sure enough!” she cries:
“Is’t not a charming place?” The boy replies,
“We’ll go no further.” “No,” says she, “no need:
No finer place than this can be, indeed!”
I left them gathering flowers, the happiest pair
That ever London sent to breathe the fine fresh air.





LINES
SUGGESTED BY A PICTURE
OF TWO FEMALES BY
LEONARDO DA VINCI

XXXIV

THE lady Blanche, regardless of all her lovers' fears,
To the Ursuline convent hastens, and long the
abbess hears.

"O Blanche, my child, repent ye of the courtly life
ye lead."

Blanche looked on a rosebud, and little seem'd to
heed.

She looked on the rosebud, she looked round and
thought

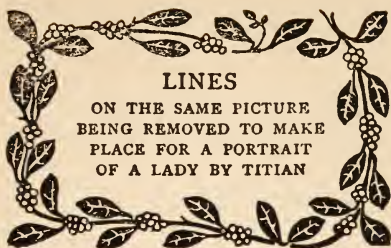
On all her heart had whisper'd, and all the Nun
had taught.

"I am worshipped by lovers, and brightly shines
my fame,

All Christendom resoundeth the noble Blanche's
name.

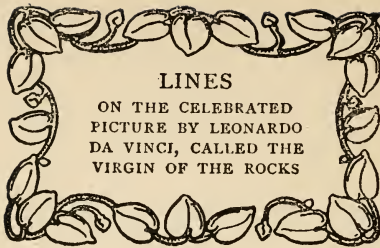
Nor shall I quickly wither like the rosebud from
the tree,
My queen-like graces shining when my beauty's
gone from me.
But when the sculptured marble is raised o'er my
head,
And the matchless Blanche lies lifeless among the
noble dead,
This saintly lady abbess hath made me justly fear
It nothing will avail me that I was worshipp'd
here."





XXXV

Who art thou, fair one, who usurp'st the place
Of Blanche, the lady of the matchless grace?
Come, fair and pretty, tell to me
Who, in thy life-time, thou might'st be.
Thou pretty art and fair,
But with the lady Blanche thou never must
compare.
No need for Blanche her history to tell;
Whoever saw her face, they there did read it well.
But when I look on thee, I only know
There lived a pretty maid some hundred years ago.



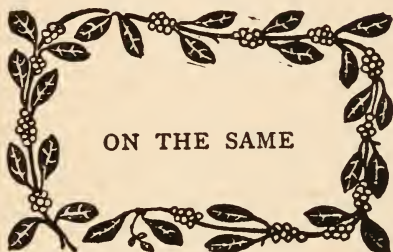
LINES

ON THE CELEBRATED
PICTURE BY LEONARDO
DA VINCI, CALLED THE
VIRGIN OF THE ROCKS

XXXVI

WHILE young John runs to greet
The greater Infant's feet,
The mother standing by, with trembling passion
Of devout admiration
Beholds the engaging mystic play, and pretty
adoration ;
Nor knows as yet the full event
Of those so low beginnings,
From whence we date our winnings,
But wonders at the intent
Of those new rites, and what that strange child-
worship meant.
But at her side
An angel doth abide,
With such a perfect joy
As no dim doubts alloy,

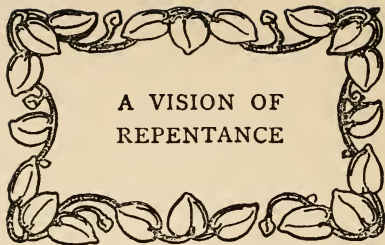
An intuition,
A glory, an amenity,
Passing the dark condition
Of blind humanity,
As if he surely knew
All the blest wonders should ensue,
Or he had lately left the upper sphere,
And had read all the sovran schemes and divine
riddles there.



ON THE SAME

XXXVII

MATERNAL lady with the virgin grace,
Heaven-born thy Jesus seemeth sure,
And thou a virgin pure.
Lady most perfect, when thy sinless face
Men look upon, they wish to be
A Catholic, Madonna fair, to worship thee.



A VISION OF
REPENTANCE

XXXVIII

I SAW a famous fountain, in my dream,
Where shady pathways to a valley led ;
A weeping willow lay upon that stream,
And all around the fountain brink were spread
Wide branching trees, with dark green leaf rich
clad,
Forming a doubtful twilight—desolate and sad.

The place was such, that whoso enter'd in,
Disrobéd was of every earthly thought,
And straight became as one that knew not sin,
Or to the world's first innocence was brought ;
Enseem'd it now, he stood on holy ground,
In sweet and tender melancholy wrapt around.

A most strange calm stole o'er my soothéd sprite ;
Long time I stood, and longer had I stay'd,
When, lo ! I saw, saw by the sweet moonlight
Which came in silence o'er that silent shade,
Where, near the fountain, something like despair
Made of that weeping willow, garlands for her hair.

And eke with painful fingers she inwove
Many an uncouth stem of savage thorn—
“The willow garland, that was for her love,
And these her bleeding temples would adorn.”
With sighs her heart nigh burst, salt tears fast fell
As mournfully she bended o'er that sacred well.

To whom when I address'd myself to speak,
She lifted up her eyes, and nothing said;
The delicate red came mantling o'er her cheek,
And, gathering up her loose attire, she fled
To the dark covert of that woody shade,
And in her goings seem'd a timid gentle maid.

Revolving in my mind what this should mean,
And why that lovely lady plained so;
Perplex'd in thought at that mysterious scene,
And doubting if 'twere best to stay or go,
I cast mine eyes in wistful gaze around,
When from the shades came slow a small and
plaintive sound.

“Psyche am I, who love to dwell
In these brown shades, this woody dell,
Where never busy mortal came
Till now, to pry upon my shame.

“At thy feet what thou dost see,
The waters of repentance be,
Which, night and day, I must augment
With tears, like a true penitent,

“If haply so my day of grace
Be not yet past; and this lone place,
O’ershadowy, dark, excludeth hence
All thoughts but grief and penitence.”

*“Why dost thou weep, thou gentle maid!
And wherefore in this barren shade
Thy hidden thoughts with sorrow feed?
Can thing so fair repentance need?”*

“Oh! I have done a deed of shame,
And tainted is my virgin fame,
And stain’d the beauteous maiden white
In which my bridal robes were dight.”

*“And who the promised spouse, declare:
And what those bridal garments were?”*

“Severe and saintly righteousness
Composed the clear white bridal dress;
Jesus, the Son of Heaven’s high King,
Bought with His blood the marriage-ring.

A wretched sinful creature, I
Deem'd lightly of that sacred tie,
Gave to a treacherous world my heart,
And play'd the foolish wanton's part.

“Soon to these murky shades I came
To hide from the sun's light my shame.
And still I haunt this woody dell
And bathe me in that healing well,
Whose waters clear have influence
From sin's foul stains the soul to cleanse;
And, night and day I them augment
With tears, like a true penitent,
Until, due expiation made,
And fit atonement fully paid,
The Lord and Bridegroom me present
Where in sweet strains of high consent,
God's throne before, the seraphim
Shall chant the ecstatic marriage-hymn.”

“Now Christ restore thee soon—” I said,
And thenceforth all my dream was fled.

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